

If you have any additional comments about the culture of scientific integrity related to the foll... - Q79#1 - open expression of scientific opinions - Please insert comments in the text boxes below

- 1 overbearing, controlling immediate supervisor whose motives are to solely satisfy immediate upper management
- 2 Ignored by political appointees and many civilian SES personnel. (b) (5)
- Those promoted under this scenario during the last administration still operate within the agency today.
- 3 (b) (5)
- 4 With the Administration during that time, there was only lip service given to scientific opinions mattering.
- 5 The open expression of scientific opinions was not a culture embraced by all in this Division and Lab. (b) (7)(A), (b) (5)
- 6 I'm not a scientist, so I don't really have these, but I know that some of my colleagues who are scientists (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)
- 7 n/a
- 8 there was not open expression of any discussions, science or policy
- 9 It was not exclusively prohibited but was not welcomed
- 10 Did not observe or experience any resistance to expression
- 11 (b) (5)
- 12 ability to do this should not change because the administration changes
- 13 Decisions were top - down and more science justified rather than science based (b) (5)
- 14 Open expression of scientific opinions was not encouraged or rewarded. My job satisfaction reached all time lows until I had an opportunity to move to another part of our office thanks to a more progressive and appreciated Office Director.
- 15 Many EPA employees fall into the category of looking for data that supports a narrative, rather than looking at the data that truly exists. People become emotionally attached to their perceptions, which then diminishes the opportunity for honest discussion and feedback. This is particularly difficult when the conclusions made by staff are different than their first line managers.
- 16 Cannot go beyond first line supervisors. There is (as a non-supervisory employee) "NO" confidence that I can share thoughts/opinions on science. Go with the NORM.
- 17 some disregard for all scientific opinions
- 18 Delay in approving materials
- 19 I am not sure I trust HQs under different administrations
- 20 I didn't work on high priority topics so have high level of responsibility in handling wide variety of scientific aspects on small subject
- 21 As long as you have the correct scientific opinion you are free to express one
- 22 (b) (5)
- 23 During the Trump administration everyone knew that communicating on (b) (5) This did not affect me personally, but was apparent and discussed in the office. Within the office (i.e. my work environment), climate change was never denied, nor was any study or research slowed or suppressed.
- 24 While we were never openly censored, it was clear that we shouldn't be talking about certain topics that were politically sensitive
- 25 During 2019-2020 employees were (b) (5) among other policy related issues.
- 26 The question of the integrity of scientific findings usually gets attention when a report or finding written by a scientist gets altered by management or political. However, another risk is the "consensus" type of thinking that pervades the agency. This is also a less obvious but equally chilling effect on open expression of scientific opinions among scientists.
- 27 The previous administration did not share or consult regions on issues with national implications.
- 28 I am ok with that.
- 29 (b) (5)
- 30 I felt confident to express my opinion in my organization but I don't work in a scientific portion of the agency
- 31 N/A
- 32 NA
- 33 Since the advent of the new administration in Jan. 2021 social scientific facts and opinions regarding equity, inclusion and diversity are no longer valued, but rather only one-sided, political determinations on these issues are valued or even discussed.
- 34 On my previous answer, while they are not directly applicable to my duties, my interaction with my colleagues are the basis of my response.
- 35 Management at all levels (b) (5) even though they were considered logical in previous 25 years.
- 36 There are very few technical/scientific position created that goes beyond GS-13. (b) (5)
- Folks who are in leadership position lack scientific and technical abilities to make scientific and technical decision. The general perception of the American community at large and within the agency is the agency lack technical and scientific credibility and merely follows the corporate mandates. God save the environment. As a matter of fact, I lost all my science related skills after joining EPA. It is my firm belief to succeed in EPA you need everything other than science and technical background.
- 37 Trump, Wheeler, and Pruitt demolished science at EPA, aided and abetted by career HQ EPA staff
- 38 (b) (5)
- 39 Within EPA, this was welcomed for me. I did not agree with the controversial view that (b) (5) were not a concern and note that this view did not come from EPA.
- 40 (b) (5) Decisions made without input from career folks in Regions.
- 41 I felt safe in expressing all opinions to branch and division management, but this is as far as it goes.
- 42 At times and in some contexts there is a group-think mentality that tends to be at work. It is often subtle and depends on the leader(s) of a project and their level of openness to criticism.
- 43 During the years 2019 and 2020, I often felt like I was not able to speak up about misrepresentations of science, for fear of retaliation. If I did speak up, I was often ignored, particularly by political leadership. Political leadership created a toxic environment, stifling the free exchange of opinions. For example, political leadership would sometimes yell at staff and career managers at meetings if staff expressed their scientific and technical opinions.
- 44 At staff level, this was true, but became increasingly more difficult to openly express conflicting opinions.
- 45 (b) (5), (b) (6)
- 46 (b) (5)
- 47 The fact that many opinions shared publicly were made by former EPA staff is/was telling
- 48 suppressed by trump policies
- 49 Political appointees questioned authority to look into issues of human health risk and were often quick to dismiss concerns.
- 50 None
- 51 (b) (5)
- 52 No additional comment.
- 53 We need more guidance and announcement about new policies.
- 54 If I worked in a politically sensitive field, I would be more concerned. But ultimately, I like to think I would be completely open without regard to repercussions.
- 55 (b) (5)
- 56 This did not seem to be of value to the Trump administration.
- 57 none
- 58 Unfortunately, my experience with line management has been one wherein they oftentimes behave in a 'my way, or the highway' mentality, irrespective of intrinsic deficits in understanding detailed aspects of current/ongoing science. A limited subset of knowledge, gleaned from review papers, appears to manifest as dogmatism.
- 59 I think high level political appointees with the last administration tried to suppress scientific thoughts and discussion

60 open expression of scientific analyses are sometimes disregarded by management (b) (5)

61 As a public affairs specialist, in the past two years (b) (5)

62 It is my impression that during the last administration, scientists and others at the agency felt unable to express their opinions without fear of retaliation, but I don't have first-hand experience on that.

63 N/A

64 What the last 2 years, 2019 & 2020, demonstrated to me was that science was politicized and integrity at EPA was greatly lost. Even when we were doing outreach about good science, communities were skeptical, based on EPA's decisions that were based on politics and not good, solid science. EPA scientists were undermined, staff's decisions or recommendations that were based on science on work like cleanups were sidelined, subject to political decisions. As an EPA employee, it was damaging to my morale and my faith in the agency when I saw decisions politicized and good science dismissed. The past 4 years showed that, if EPA had been able to maintain scientific integrity despite the political shifts in administrations, this integrity was shattered by the politics of the last 4 years. Communities have lost faith in EPA and we have a lot of work to build up that trust. My hope is that EPA can demonstrate its scientific integrity once again, by bolstering the science-based work of its staff.

65 None.

66 For 2019-2020, political appointees affected decisions that should have been made based on science and resources. Instead, some decisions appeared to be driven by political forces.

67 Unrelated to this, but on the previous question, i have not submitted data to a jnl so the questions was not applicable to me. There wasn't a space to indicate that or not respond.

68 (b) (5) This attitude rippled to all corners of EPA. The only silver lining of this was that it clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of our agency's integrity to political whims.

69 Open where? In the office? Publicly? We put disclaimers on every presentation/paper saying it's our personal opinion, but it's been cleared by multiple managers. Isn't that misrepresentative?

70 At (b) (6) this was not an issue.

71 The item referenced "my scientific opinions" and, (b) (6) I'm a reviewer of scientific opinions.

72 Employees should be well aware of the policies and the Agency may encourage scientists to publish science in peer reviewed journals. It would be hugely beneficial if EPA can organize yearly Scientific/Regulatory conference to disseminate science and policy messages to the employees more effectively.

73 There is a management culture that inhibits respecting the knowledge of technical staff who have been working in research for decades, and challenging program offices who are implementing regulations and policies that are either contradicted by or not consistent with known science. (b) (5) Upper (b) (6) staff march to a totally different career drum than the staff who are dedicated public servants first and foremost.

74 The Trump administration was a disaster for science.

75 N/A

76 (b) (5)

77 I wasn't sure who "decision makers" at the regional level referred to - appointed administrators, or general upper-level management/all senior leaders. I have always felt able to express my scientific opinions to our career senior leaders at (b) (6)

78 n/a

79 In the last two years, I believe there was a general belief that (b) (5) This was more in HQ than the regional offices but definitely felt agency wide that one need to tread carefully.

80 (b) (5) Too much emphasis on passing risk cups and not on human health protection as our mission.

81 I don't feel comfortable openly asking questions like, is EPA culture green enough? Progressive enough?

82 (b) (5)

83 controlled by the factors

84 I have found in various technical meetings that members have openly and freely expressed their opinions. I have not witnessed any hinderances to allow people to speak.

85 (b) (5)

86 disagreements were not discussed and clarified. senior managers made decisions and moved ahead without staff.

87 Senior leadership in (b) (6) was not driven by science but were transparent about that fact

88 No additional Comment

89 Leadership under the previous administration and the leaders they put in place valued "towing the line" with policy calls over any semblance of scientific integrity.

90 Management in (b) (6) maintained its support for open and honest discussion of scientific data and conclusions drawn from them.

91 Regions tended to be a safer place to respect science. HQ was known to have political influence impact science based decisions

92 wide variety of perspectives including dissent from the general opinion is not encouraged

93 I work in (b) (6). Not related to this.

94 Over the past two years it was often clear that the decision-makers had a path in mind and were not interested in dissenting opinions

95 The basis of some decisions were not based on the scientific data but on specific program office agendas.

96 (b) (5) I have to push certain ideas harder to even get them on the agenda. Sometimes quick limits on discussion.

97 PFAS Action Plan was multimedia approach

98 Agree

99 (b) (5)

100 I worked with (b) (6) on a journal article in the past 12 months and found the process to be completely open with any opinion welcomed and discussed professionally. Wonderful experience.

101 I have noticed that some (b) (6) staff with expertise in scientific matters present their views in a way that does not seem fair and impartial. This makes me wonder whether they have been influenced by (b) (6) management to take certain positions, at the expense of scientific integrity, to support (b) (6) managers' (b) (5)

102 No opportunity to brief senior management on use of science in evaluation of rulemaking. Therefore no opportunity to express opinions.